

4. Vyasa And Narada Are Like Man And God

If a person's desires are all fulfilled, his devotion to God strengthens. If his desires are not fulfilled, his devotion weakens and he even neglects God altogether.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Vyasa wrote the sacred *Bhagavatha* which is often referred to as the fifth *Veda*. Vyasa was a great individual who could overcome all human weaknesses like anger, greed and lust; and so, he could write, this great text. Today you will learn some facts about Vyasa. He was given to yogic practice in life, and one day he was sitting on the banks of a river and was in a very depressed mood. He was thinking about time which was fleeting away and was feeling that his life span was melting away like a block of ice without any worthwhile achievement. He was trying to understand how he should lead his life. Although he had studied and understood all the *Vedas* and *Puranas*, he was worried that his writings and teachings were not giving peace and happiness to the people in the world. He realised that all his knowledge should have been used to give peace and prosperity to the world, and he felt unhappy that it was not being utilised for this purpose. At that moment, Narada entered the scene. Narada was the son of Saraswathi, and Vyasa was sitting on the banks of river Saraswathi and thinking of these problems. Saraswathi signifies the form of the latent unspoken word. This Saraswathi is like the traditional river which is believed to be flowing in an unmanifested form. Narada as an individual was representing Saraswathi. There is an inseparable connection between the manifested and the unmanifested aspect of Saraswathi. Ordinarily,

in the mind of a human being, thought processes are generated and he then speaks out. The words that we hear are the manifested words representing the unmanifested Saraswathi. The stream of thoughts, that arise in his mind are given the shape and form of the spoken word. *Bhagavatha* has been proclaiming the inseparable connection between the manifested and the unmanifested forms. The two aspects, namely the manifested and unmanifested are closely related like the object and its image. Narada taught Vyasa that all the texts and scriptures which do not contain a praise of the *leelas* of the Lord are hollow and have no life in them. They will not attract people at all. Acquaintance with all the books and the scholarship that one might possess are meant for attracting the world, but they will not be able to attract and purify your own mind. If what one writes can give him purity of thought and liberation from worldly attachments, that can be regarded as a proper text. Sweetness is a natural quality of sugar; but if we just have a knowledge of this fact, we will not know that sugar is indeed sweet. This experience relates only to the palate, and your tongue alone can identify the sweetness of sugar. The sweetness of sugar is not known to sugar itself. It is only when there is an individual who, through his palate, has experienced the sweetness of sugar, can the sweetness of sugar be realised. As in the analogy, the *ananda* or bliss associated with God will be known only to the individual who seeks such *ananda* and bliss. It is the devotee who seeks and enjoys the experience of *ananda* and not God. Narada told Vyasa that he had only written about such happiness, but he had not experienced it. Narada then told Vyasa that from that day he would have the capacity to sing the glory of God and advised that Vyasa should do this and derive bliss and joy.

Singing of a *bhajan* is usually associated with singing with a rhythm. In reality, if we can give a form to what is con-

tained in *Sama Veda*, that itself can be described as *bhajan*. All types of tunes have their origin in *Sama Veda*. Narada also told Vyasa that if such a sacred song is sung with proper feeling and devotion, then the significance of the song will also be clear. The sacredness of divine nature that is present in each individual can be experienced in the form of a song. There is a small example for this. When two individuals are talking with each other, one individual enters the other in the form of sound. This concept of an individual entering another in the form of sound is not clearly understood today. When you are face to face with God and think of His name and glory, the form of God will enter you. It is in this context that the *Sastras* and *Puranas* advise you to spend all your time in the thought of God and in singing His glory. We are, therefore, told that God is present in all living things, and that all living things in their turn are present in the divine. If several people gather and sing the glory of God in a congregation, then *prajnana*, or knowledge of God, will come to everyone in the gathering. The sacred work of Vyasa was such that it demonstrated the unity amidst all the diversity in creation. Narada used the word *ambhoja* in the present context and that means a thing that is born in water. Not only man, but all living things are born from water. All trees and everything else is born from water. Even if we have a small seed, it can sprout only if it is in contact with water. If there is no water, even this seed will perish. In this context, Narada said that the human body must be regarded as a lotus. All texts and writings in relation to God will consist of a lotus implying that such a text is a lotus coming out of a lake. The state of our mind is compared to a lake that contains two swans represented by the aspects of *Soham*. This sound of *Soham* proclaims "I am That" and demonstrates the oneness of all creation. The swan always symbolises purity in our tradition; and when we compare this aspect to that of *Soham*, we wish to bring out the purity in all creation. This implies that in the *ma-*

nasarovar or the mind of man, which is like a lake, the identity between man and God should be promoted. Because of such sacred teachings from Narada, there was a divine feeling in Vyasa which enabled him to write the sacred text of *Bhagavatha*. Because Narada removed all the doubts from the mind of Vyasa, Narada was taken as *guru* and that day has since been referred to as *Guru Pournima*. As the role of the *guru* is to remove ignorance from the dark minds, it is also referred to as the coming of *Pournima* or brightness. The *Vedas* have compared the mind to the moon and the eye to the sun. What we see directly and readily is the moon or the reflection of our own mind. With the help of a *guru*, the mind can be cleansed and the spots and blemishes removed, and so this day is to be referred to as *Guru Pournima*.

We generally use the word heart to signify the physical heart and the life force that is responsible for all action, but this is not so. The heart should not be interpreted as something which is localised at one spot in the body. The totality of the life force in a human being is to be referred to as the heart. If we talk of America, does it mean that my heart has travelled as far as America? In total reality, the life force in you can be compared to the heart. This has been called *maha prajnana* and has been demonstrated to us as the form of *Brahma*. In one of the *maha vakyas* “*prajnanam Brahma,*” *prajnana* has in fact been identified with *Brahma*. Narada took the position of a *guru* and used Vyasa to explain the function of a *guru* and in this context, this day is also referred to as *Vyasa Pournima*.

Today there is also another event of exceptional significance. From the authority we can get from the *Vedas*, we believe that *buddhi* is superior to all other sensory organs. Compared to *buddhi*, the *Atma* is in a higher position. *Buddhi*

and *Atma* are so close to each other that *buddhi* gets its illumination from the *Atma*. The mind is in a higher position than the sensory organs. *Buddhi* is in a higher position than the mind. The effulgence of *Atma* falls directly on the *Buddhi*; and therefore, if we follow the dictates of our *Buddhi*, we can control our sensory organs. In this context, this day is also described as *Buddha Jayanti*. Thus *Guru Pournima*, *Buddha Jayanti*, and *Vyasa Pournima* are like the confluence of the three sacred rivers. It is in this context that in the *Purusha Sukta*, it has been said that we must bring these three aspects together and offer it to Lord Shiva. Because of these sacred teachings of Narada, Vyasa undertook a pledge that from that day, he would write the story of Krishna and his divine *leelas*. He was occasionally asking Krishna, “Are you not satisfied with the excellent scholarship that I have achieved and the manner in which I am praising you?” Vyasa asked such questions because he was still proud of his scholarship and his achievements. The arrogance of his intellectual achievement was responsible for this ego. The ego that has its origin in anything else can be removed; but if the ego is acquired because of one’s scholarship, it cannot be easily removed. Education and scholarship should enable you to get rid of your ego; but if the same education and scholarship generate the ego in you, how can this be removed? The ego that one gets by thinking that he is a very learned person is the biggest obstacle in the way of his getting divine enlightenment. However, this has a welcome aspect because only when such obstacles arise can man attempt to remove his faults. Out of happiness, we will never get happiness. It is only out of troubles that we get happiness. Even if you want to make good ornaments from gold, you will have to put it into fire and subject it to a high temperature. In a similar manner, God creates several difficulties for people and subjects them to many tests before letting them realise His sacred and divine aspects. This is particularly so with people who suffer from an

intellectual ego. We have to note here that Vyasa wrote the *Bhagavatha* and all the *Puranas*, but he never put any of the things about which he wrote into practice. He attained great efficiency in communicating his ideas to others, but he did not attempt to put them into practice. Vyasa, who recognised this fault in himself, prayed thus to Krishna, “Can we find out your divine nature, Oh Krishna? You are smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. How can we describe your greatness?” He further wrote, “It is said that you reside in the hearts of all the 84 *lakhs* of *jivas* in creation without being separated from them.” Here, we should notice that while he pronounces his knowledge about some aspects of God, he also expresses his doubts in other aspects. At this stage, Narada told Vyasa that there should never be a doubt in one’s mind about any aspect of the divine. It is not without reason that I have spent so much time telling you about Vyasa today. It is only when you have confidence in the speaker, will you have confidence in what he says. Only when you understand the thinking on the part of those who wrote the *Bhagavatha* and on the part of those who figure in the text of the *Bhagavatha* can you understand the sacred text itself. It is in this context that I have given you the full life story of Vyasa and of Narada. Vyasa and Narada are like man and God. Vyasa is asking the questions and Narada is answering them. If we understand this relationship between Vyasa and Narada, we can appreciate the inner meaning of the *Bhagavatha*. Tomorrow we shall hear about the life story of Narada and from then on, we shall learn about the *leelas* of Krishna.